




Speech By  
**Hon. Charis Mullen**

**MEMBER FOR JORDAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2024

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE  
AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; STATE FINANCIAL  
INSTRUCTIONS AND METWAY MERGER AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. C MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.09 pm): I rise to support the appropriation bills. The Miles government's 2024-25 state budget is providing real, practical help and cost-of-living relief for our most vulnerable Queenslanders. This includes young people, seniors, carers, people with disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. There is support for vulnerable Queenslanders, with a significant investment of \$2.3 billion for child and family services, \$3.7 billion for seniors and disability services and \$21 million for multicultural affairs.

Children and young people in care deserve every chance to live happy and healthy lives. Foster and kinship carers are critical to helping this happen. That is why we are investing an extra \$190.8 million over four years so more carers looking after children with complex and high support needs can access extra financial support. This new investment means that carers of more than one-in-five children in out-of-home care will receive between \$5,660 and \$21,740 extra a year. It is a move that reflects the increasing complexity of the needs of these young people. While residential care remains a necessary part of a suite of out-of-home care for children and young people, increasing the number of kinship and foster carers is our key focus. Those organisations we partner with to provide residential care receive our utmost respect and support, but our government's ambition will always be to have far fewer children and young people living in them. It is why we have developed our five-year residential care road map, with our aim to halve the number of children and young people in residential care.

We also understand the pressures being created by the increased cost of living. That is why we are investing an extra \$31.8 million over five years and \$7.9 million ongoing for the Extended Post Care Support program. This program provides financial support for young people leaving care up to their 21st birthday, whether they remain with their carer family or choose to live independently. This has been a life-changing reform for many young people. It gives them more time and more support to find the right path as they transition out of their teenage years and into adulthood. I have been told that this funding has helped young people buy a car so they can get to work and study. It has helped them pay rental deposits, upgrade their skills and access necessary services. Extended Post Care Support has changed the lives of those leaving out-of-home care. This additional funding reinforces our commitment to children and young people in care during the early years of their lives.

We are also supporting vulnerable families with new funding for early intervention and support through the Putting Queensland Kids First strategy. We will invest \$9 million over two years for Safe Pathways initiatives to provide early intervention support for families and mums with babies. The aim is to reduce the risk of child protection involvement. There is an extra \$2 million over two years to trial a Family Connections program in two locations. During the trial, clinicians will work with families in their homes and connect them with the right services at the right times.

The Queensland government also remains committed to supporting Queenslanders with disability. The recommendations of the royal commission and National Disability Insurance Scheme review were significant. It gave us an opportunity to consider how we improve outcomes for people with disability in Queensland. As an initial response to the recommendations, we have allocated more than \$160 million in extra funding across government for disability reforms for better services and supports. This includes an immediate investment of \$5 million for disability advocacy to uphold the rights and needs of people with disability. There is also \$24.4 million over five years to develop a stakeholder strategy led by the disability sector. The voices of people with disability will always be at the heart of this important process and we are committed to partnering with them to reform the system. We will also invest \$7.5 million over two years to continue disability supports for children with autism in Queensland.

Queensland is one of the most culturally diverse places in the world. As part of the multicultural affairs budget we are investing an extra \$4.8 million over two years in the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance program. This will provide more support to people escaping conflict zones and who may not have access to work rights, benefits or public health due to visa restrictions. We will also inject an extra \$1 million over two years into the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma. This will expand an initiative that is working in more than 50 schools to support children, young people and their caregivers, particularly those directly affected by the trauma of global conflicts. Support for grassroots multicultural communities will also continue in this year's state budget. I am pleased to say that the highly popular Celebrating Multicultural Queensland grants program will receive \$3 million. This will ensure the fantastic display of colourful cultural events and festivals will continue around the state.

The Deputy Speaker has reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*.

*The speech read as follows—*

They also provide opportunities for more social and economic participation by people with a culturally or linguistically diverse background.

As part of the Queensland Government's Community Safety Plan, we are investing \$2.6 million over two years to support the African Youth Support Council's newly established African Villages in Moorooka, Geebung and Redbank Plains.

These centres are modelled on the idea that 'it takes a village to raise a child'.

Under the safety plan, we are also allocating \$5.7 million over two years to design and implement a pilot family reunification service for children aged 12 to 15 and their families.

The aim is to improve relationships and facilitate children's reunification.

This service will operate across greater Brisbane and support around 150 children each year.

Speaker, the Queensland Government is proud to support older Queenslanders.

We are committed to helping them to stay active and feel connected and cared about.

Importantly, we want to provide older Queenslanders with real, practical assistance, so they can live their best lives.

And right now, that means helping them with the increased cost of living.

That's why this budget includes \$1 billion in concessions and rebates on energy, utilities and rates bills, and the Cost of Living Rebate.

We want to put more money in the pockets of older Queenslanders so they can enjoy more time doing what makes them happy, healthy and connected.

Speaker,

The 2024—25 State Budget is a budget for the people.

Importantly, it is a budget that recognises and responds to the challenges being experienced by some of our most vulnerable people.

Especially with cost of living.

Across government, the Treasurer has announced measures that will ease the cost of living for every Queenslanders.

This includes our seniors, our foster and kinship carers, young people in care and our culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Measures such as:

- 50 cent public transport fares.
- \$1000 electricity rebates, rising to \$1672 for vulnerable households, including eligible seniors.
- Reductions in car registration.
- Significant support for first-home buyers.

I believe how we look after the most vulnerable in our communities speaks to the Queensland we are and want to continue to be.

Deputy Speaker, I want to also speak to some of the local initiatives in my electorate that have received funding in this year's State Budget.

I am pleased to see further investment for the Greenbank Battery.

This will provide for a 200MW of battery storage, able to power 60,000 Logan homes for two hours during peaks and a vital link to transfer stored solar and wind energy onto the grid.

The Greater Springfield new permanent fire and rescue station had been delayed due to some issues with the land provided however, we are all systems go and we are now able to progress the construction of our new fire station with \$5 million in this year's Budget.

One of the big wins for our Ipswich communities is the \$36.3 million for increased bus services. This is something that our Labor Members in Ipswich have been calling for and we were fortunate to have a Transport and Mobility Study undertaken last year.

The community provided its feedback and I welcome the proposed changes and improvements including:

- A new service for Augustine Heights as well as Springfield.
- The introduction of a new direct route linking Springfield and Ipswich via Redbank Plains
- The extension of existing routes in Springfield Lakes, Camira and Spring Mountain.

There will also be improved connectivity to rail services and to Ipswich Hospital.

One of the biggest issues in our community is the Centenary Motorway—and I am pleased to see ongoing investment of \$1.4 million for more detailed planning which will scope out the projects along the section from Ellen Grove to Yamanto.

This will include the section between Exit 31 and Exit 33—with a duplication of this section being proposed.

Education continues to be well supported in the Jordan Electorate and we have new builds funded for Springfield Central State High School, Woodcrest State College and Camira State School.

I'm also very happy to see a new security fence for Woodcrest State College—this is something that the school raised with me only recently and I am stoked that I am able to deliver this for our school community there.

Four schools in the Jordan Electorate have also received funding through our very popular School Playground and Tuckshop Upgrades—this includes Springfield Lakes State School, Camira State School, Greenbank State School and Woodcrest State College.

Speaker, the Jordan Electorate continues to see significant growth and I am thrilled at the health investment that we are making locally but also across the Ipswich and Logan regions.

We have a brand new public hospital under construction in Springfield which is due to open in early 2026.

Massive upgrades to both the Ipswich and Logan Hospitals, the new Ripley Satellite Hospital and Sub-Acute Facility, the new Acute Mental Health Facility and the development of a new Alcohol and Other Drug Rehabilitation and Treatment facility.

Speaker, this is a Budget about priorities. I would like to commend the Deputy Premier and Treasurer on delivering a budget that has focused on cost of living relief, investment in infrastructure, education, health, community safety and in a renewable energy future.

Our Government has focused on these issues because we know they are the priorities for the people of Queensland—and we are doing what matters to them.

I commend the Bill to the House.